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From: Cosmo Beatson <[cosmo@visionfirstnow.org](mailto:cosmo@visionfirstnow.org)>  
Date: 2012/2/13  
Subject: Where did these UNHCR millions go?  
To: [plc@legco.gov.hk](mailto:plc@legco.gov.hk)  
Cc:

Dear LEGCO President and Legislators –

We are a registered charity working with refugees in Hong Kong since 2009. We are very concerned about this issue.

We have all heard refugees complain about UNHCR for too long. In expensive Hong Kong, we reached the point where urban refugees would rather be protected in camps, than be forced into begging destitution by the very UN agency mandated to protect them. The situation reached a tipping point last month, when the refugee allowance of USD 194 was cut to USD 38 (plus food rations). Problem is the cash was being spent on diverse items besides food, including: rent, utilities, medicines, children needs, phone cards, personal items and haircuts, to give an example. The UNHCR has even asked HKSAR to spend over 2,000,000 HKD on refugee food assistance when they are sending the millions collected here overseas. Why?

The cut would have been understandable, if genuinely there were no funds – as UNHCR assured both NGOs and refugees – but we discovered that local private donations exceeded 2 Million USD in both 2010 and 2011! Without drawing nefarious conclusions, we surmise the change hides ulterior motives not on the transparency agenda for those on whose behalf these funds were raised.

We blogged about it and touched a raw nerve. The refugee community is not impressed. This comes as no surprise to those who listen to refugees compassionately. However, cozy feathers were ruffled where accountability and disclosure are not valued as a credibility advantage. Please read our blog and, in particular, the indignant comments that followed. We believe a wave is forming and ask for your support to dig deeper into this problem.

Why does HKSAR subsidize UNHCR and allow them to remit overseas these millions?

<http://visionfirstnow.org/2012/01/29/where-did-these-unhcr-millions-go/>

Kindest regards,

Cosmo Beatson

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